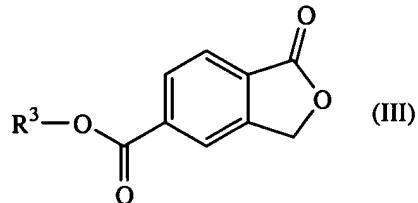


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

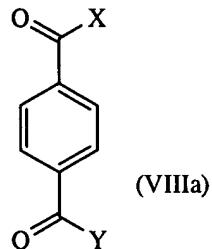
Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for preparing an alkoxy carbonyl phthalide of formula (III)



comprising:

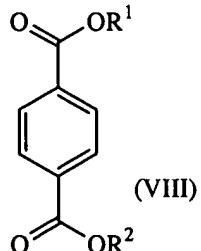
(a) reacting a compound of formula (VIIia) with a formaldehyde and oleum; and



(b) addition of adding an alcohol of the formula $R^3\text{-OH}$ to the reaction of step (a);

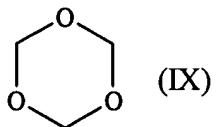
wherein X and Y of formula (VIIia) ~~may be selected are~~ independently selected from the group consisting of: OR^1 , OR^2 , a halogen (such as Cl, Br, I), and NR; wherein R, R^1 and R^2 are independently H or a C₁₋₆-alkyl; and R^3 is a C₁₋₆-alkyl or phenyl.

Claim 2 (currently amended): The A method according to claim 1 wherein the compound of formula (VIIia) is a compound of formula (VIII)



wherein R^1 and R^2 are selected independently from H and C₁₋₆-alkyl.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The method of claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the formaldehyde is 1,3,5-trioxane of formula IX[.]



Claim 4 (currently amended): The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the formaldehyde is paraformaldehyde.

Claims 5-11 (canceled)

Claim 12 (currently amended): The method of claim 1 any of the preceding claims, wherein R¹ and R² are selected independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, iso-propyl, n-butyl, iso-butyl, sec.-butyl, tert-butyl, n-pentyl, and n-hexyl.

Claims 13-20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (currently amended): The method of claim 1 any of the preceding claims, wherein the amount of formaldehyde reacted in step (a) is used 1-3 equivalents of the formaldehyde per equivalent of the compound of formula (VIII).

Claim 22 (canceled)

Claim 23 (currently amended): The method of claim 1 any of the preceding claims, wherein the amount of oleum reacted there in step (a) is used 1-8 liters of oleum per kg of formula (VIII), such as 1.5-6 l/Kg; 1.5-4 l/Kg; 1.5-3.5 l/kg, preferably in the range of 1.5-3.5 l oleum per kg of formula (VIII).

Claim 24 (canceled)

Claim 25 (currently amended): The method of claim 1 any of the preceding claims, wherein the oleum in step (a) contains 18-65% SO₃.

Claim 26 (canceled)

Claim 27 (canceled)

Claim 28 (currently amended): The method of claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~, wherein step (a) is performed at a temperature in the range of 115 °C - 175 °C.

Claims 29-32 (canceled)

Claim 33 (currently amended): The method of claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~, wherein step (b) is performed at a temperature below the boiling point of the alcohol.

Claim 34 (canceled)

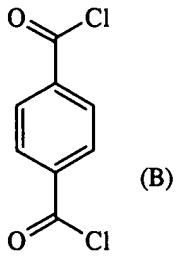
Claim 35 (canceled)

Claim 36 (currently amended): The method of claim 1 ~~any of the preceding claims~~, said method comprising purification of the alkoxy carbonyl phthalide by adding ~~addition of~~ an organic solvent and an aqueous solvent to the alkoxy carbonyl phthalide, preferably water, thereby and extracting the alkoxy carbonyl phthalide into the organic phase.

Claim 37 (canceled)

Claim 38 (canceled)

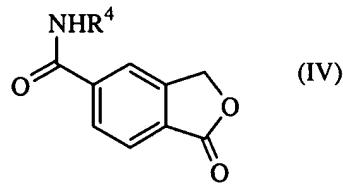
Claim 39 (currently amended): A The method of claim 1 or ~~any of claims 3-11 referring to claim 1 or any of claims 21-38 referring to claim 1~~, wherein the compound of formula (VIIa) is terephthaloyl dichloride of formula (B)



Claim 40 (canceled)

Claim 41 (canceled)

Claim 42 (currently amended): The method of claim 1 as defined in any of claims 1-41, further comprising converting the alkoxy carbonyl phthalide resulting from said method to the an amide of formula (IV), wherein R⁴ is H or C₁₋₆-alkyl[.]



Claims 43-45 (canceled)

Claim 46 (currently amended): A method for the synthesis of 5-cyanophthalide comprising the method for preparing an alkoxy carbonyl phthalide of formula (III) according to claim 1 any of claims 1-41.

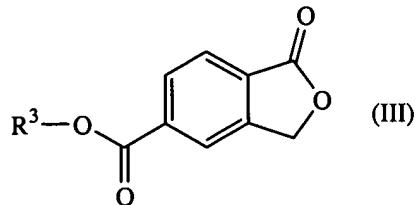
Claim 47 (canceled)

Claim 48 (currently amended): A method for the synthesis of citalopram or escitalopram comprising a method for preparing a alkoxy carbonyl phthalide of formula (III) according to claim 1 any of claims 1-41.

Claim 49 (currently amended): A method for the synthesis of citalopram or escitalopram comprising the method for the synthesis of 5-cyanophthalide according to claim 46 of any of claims 45-46.

Claim 50 (currently amended): A method for preparing an intermediate suitable for the synthesis of citalopram or escitalopram, said method comprising the steps of:

(i) preparing a alkoxycarbonylphthalide of formula (III)[[.,]]

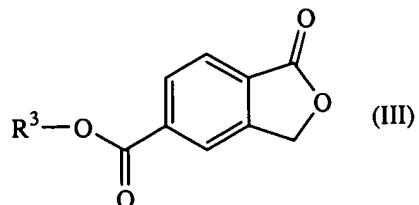


wherein R³ is a C₃-C₆-alkyl; and

(ii) subjecting the alkoxycarbonylphthalide of formula (III) to an isolation procedure,—said isolation procedure preferably comprising a filtration step.

Claims 51-56 (canceled)

Claim 57 (original): An alkoxycarbonylphthalide of formula (III),



wherein R³ is a C₁₋₆-alkyl or phenyl.

Claim 58 (canceled)